

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6-9, and 12-23 are pending in the present application. Claims 5 and 24 have been cancelled by the above amendment. Claims 10 and 11 were previously cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 are independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 2-4, 6, 7, 14, 15, and 20-24 recite allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten into independent form including all the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have accepted the Examiner's determination of allowability in this regard and have rewritten each of these claims into independent form with the exception of claim 24.

Applicants have utilized the allowable features of claim 24 to establish patentability of the rejected independent claims 1, 13, 17, and 19.

Applicants further appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 9, 12 and 18 are allowed.

Given the incorporation of clearly allowed subject matter and to each of the rejected claims and their rewriting of the allowed dependent claims into independent form, all claims are now clearly in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants earnestly solicit the formal indication thereof in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 5, 13, 17, and 19 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Ozawa (USP 6,080,104). Claims 8 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozawa in view of Nagasaka (USP 6,157,744). This rejection, insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, the allowable features of claim 24 have been added to each of the rejected independent claims 1, 13, 17, and 19. Therefore, the prior art rejections are now moot and applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Conclusion

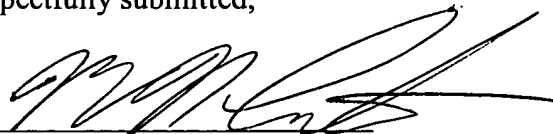
Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Michael R. Cammarata (Reg. No. 39,491) at (703) 205-8000.

Pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.R. § 1.17 and 1.136(a), the Applicants hereby petition for an extension of two (2) months to August 21, 2006 in which to file a reply to the Office Action. The required fee of \$ 450.00 is enclosed herewith.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment from or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. §1.17; particularly, the extension of time fees.

Date: August 21, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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